

PROGRAM CONSULTATION & COORDINATION/CX CHECKLIST  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
TUCSON FIELD OFFICE

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW**

**ASSIGNMENT AND REVIEW**

NEPA #: AZ-420-2005-

Project Name: Empire Ranch Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project

Sub-activity: 2824

Location (legal description): T 20S, R 21E, Section 3

Case/Project #:

NLCS Unit: N/A

Quad Name: Empire Ranch

Project Lead: Dan Quintana

Draft Review: Unit Manager/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Technical Review:

Exception	NAME	EXCEPTION	SIGNATURE	DATE
<b>Applies?</b> <b>Yes No</b>				
( ) ( )	Bill Auby	(1) Have Significant adverse effects on public health or safety?		
( ) ( )	Francisco Mendoza	(2) Have adverse effects on such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, parks, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains or ecologically significant or critical areas including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks.		
( ) ( )	Darrell Tersey	(3) Have highly controversial environmental effects.		
( ) ( )	Bill Auby	(4) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		
( ) ( )	Dan Moore	(5) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		
( ) ( )	Francisco Mendoza	(6) Individually Insignificant, but cumulatively significant effects.		
( ) ( )	Max Witkind	(7) Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.		
( ) ( )	Keith Hughes	(8) Have adverse effects on species listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		
( ) ( )	Keith Hughes	(9) Require compliance with EO 11988, 11990 (Protection of Wetlands) or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.		
( ) ( )	Dan Moore	(10) Threaten to violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		

Final Review:

Unit Manager/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Environmental Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Decision Memorandum on Action and for Application of:**

### **Categorical Exclusion 1.12**

#### **Empire Ranch Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Tucson Field Office  
Cochise County, Arizona

#### **Purpose and Need for the Action**

Resource and fire managers for the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA) have identified the need to reduce the fuel loading in and around the Empire Ranch historic site. The fuels located at this site need to be reduced to help protect the historic site from damage due to wildfire and allow the road into the historic site to be used as an access/egress corridor during wildfire events.

#### **Plan Conformance**

This categorical exclusion conforms to the following resource management plan:

Approved Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision July 2003; Appendix 8 Integrated Vegetation Treatment Program, pg. A8-3.

- Environmental Impact Statement Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in thirteen western states 1991.
- Arizona Statewide Wild & scenic Rivers final EIS Statement.
- Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management.

#### **Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act**

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, appendix 1, 1.12.

The application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment.

The application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect any of the ten exceptions listed in 516 DM 2, appendix 2 (actions that require an environmental assessment).

The fuels surrounding the Empire Ranch Historic Site are in condition class 2, fire regime I.

**Treatment Parameters**

The Following treatment parameters may be used:

- Mowing of perennial/annual grasses and weeds in and around the Empire Ranch Historic Site (includes main building, huachuca house, field station, residence west of field station, parking area, adobe shed, barn, corrals, and RAWs station)
- Mowing of perennial/annual grasses and weeds within 15 feet of the access road to the residence west of field house
- Thinning/limbing of trees, shrubs, and brush within 75 feet of the field station and residence west of field station (thinning of live trees will be limited to trees with a basal diameter of 8 inches or less, limbing will be up to six feet in height; cottonwood, hackberry, oak, or willow trees will not be removed)
- Removal of stumps along east side of field station with back hoe (with archeologist approval)

**Persons and Agencies Consulted**

Mark Pater, Fire Ecologist Gila District

Kieth Hughes, Range Conservation Las Cienegas NCA

Linda J. Marianito, Planning and Environmental Coordinator Tucson Field Office

**Decision and Rationale on Action**

I have decided to implement the proposed action for hazardous fuels reduction around the Empire Ranch Historic Site. These actions meet the need for action. In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required."

**Implementation Date**

This treatment will be implemented between the dates of October 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>. The treatment will be implemented on an annual basis, in years with normal or above normal winter precipitation the treatment may need to be implemented twice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tucson Field Office Manager

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

This categorical exclusion will be in effect for five years, after the initial five years this categorical exclusion will be reviewed. The treatment will be reviewed by fire and resource managers. If fire and resource managers conclude that the treatment is still required then this categorical exclusion will be initiated for another period of time. This Categorical exclusion is subject to administrative review or appeal.

**Contact person**

Dan Quintana

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